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MANCHESTER  
CITY COUNCIL

Engaging young  
people involved  
with the justice  
system into  
substance use  
treatment services

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Manchester Centre for Youth Studies  
Manchester Metropolitan University



The Manchester  
Centre for  
Youth Studies



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## Chapter 1 - Introduction

*'It's like nailing jelly to a wall isn't it? The whole process of getting a young person to engage [with Eclipse].'* (YJS 2)

Despite a downward trend over the last 10 years in both reported substance use among young people<sup>1</sup> and the number of young people entering specialist substance use treatment services<sup>2</sup>, for some particular groups of young people, substance use remains a pressing issue. One such group is young people involved in the justice system<sup>3</sup>. A 2002 study of nearly 300 young people working with youth justice services across England and Wales found that 85 per cent had used illicit substances<sup>4</sup>. Furthermore, the government's *2017 Drug Strategy* highlights young people involved in the justice system as particularly vulnerable to developing problematic substance use<sup>5</sup>. Despite this, interventions which have been specifically designed to address substance use among young people involved with the justice system are currently lacking, as is research on best practice when it comes to engaging this particular cohort into substance use treatment services<sup>6</sup>.

By working closely with the Manchester Youth Justice Service and Eclipse (Manchester's young people's drug and alcohol service), this research study aims to address this deficit and provide guidance and recommendations as to how to best engage young people involved in the justice system into substance use treatment services.

### Research objectives

- To gain a clearer understanding of the nature and prevalence of substance use among those young people involved with the Manchester Youth Justice Service.
- To provide a review of current guidance on how to best engage young people into substance use services, and identify the extent to which this guidance is currently being implemented by the Manchester Youth Justice Service and Eclipse.
- To ascertain the views of both young people engaged with the Manchester Youth Justice Service, and staff from both the Youth Justice Service and Eclipse, as to how to improve young people's engagement with substance use services.
- To identify any gaps in current service provision.
- To highlight any staff training needs and/or knowledge gaps.
- To provide recommendations as to how the Manchester Youth Justice Service and Eclipse can improve future service delivery.

## Chapter 2 - Literature review

### The link between substance use and offending

In recent years, there has been a decline in the number of young people recorded as entering specialist substance use services<sup>7</sup>. This is likely to reflect the overall decline in the number of young people reported to be using drugs and alcohol over the last decade<sup>8</sup>. The 2016 *Smoking, drinking and drug use among young people in England* schools survey found that three per cent of pupils were weekly smokers, 10 per cent had drunk alcohol in the last week, and 10 per cent had taken drugs in the last month<sup>9</sup>. As in previous years, pupils were more likely to have taken cannabis than any other drug<sup>10</sup>. Indeed, the annual young people's statistics from the National Drug Treatment Monitoring Service showed that in 2016/17, 88 per cent of young people reported either primary or adjunctive cannabis use<sup>11</sup>. Interestingly, the most recent statistics from Public Health England show that the number of young people who had problems with benzodiazepines at the start of treatment has almost doubled (from 161 in 2016/17 to 315 in 2017/18), with the biggest increase in the use of Xanax<sup>12</sup>.

While young people in general are considered vulnerable to developing substance use problems, some groups are particularly vulnerable<sup>13</sup>. One group that has been identified as having a greater risk of problematic substance use is those young people involved with the justice system<sup>14</sup>. Indeed, in the 2017 *Drug Strategy*, one of the groups highlighted as being 'high priority' were young offenders<sup>15</sup>. The reason for this is that offending behaviour and substance use are 'inextricably linked'<sup>16</sup>; largely because the 'same constellation of risk factors' predict both behaviours amongst young people<sup>17</sup>. Indeed, it has been argued that young people's experiences of substance use and offending may be 'mutually reinforcing'<sup>18</sup>.

Although there is no 'simple causal relationship' between substance use and offending behaviour, as pointed out by the Drugs Prevention Advisory Service, contact with the youth justice system offers a 'valuable opportunity to intervene early with young offenders involved with drugs'<sup>19</sup>. Interestingly, though, despite the aforementioned links between substance use and offending behaviour, the proportion of referrals to specialist substance use treatment services from the youth justice service has been declining in recent years (from 39 per cent in 2010-11 to 26 per cent in 2015-16<sup>20</sup> and 23 per cent in 2017/18<sup>21</sup>).

### The complex needs of those in the youth justice system

The size of the youth justice system is 'significantly reduced' when compared with a decade ago<sup>22</sup>. For example, over the last 10 years, the number of first time entrants has fallen by 85 per cent, the number of young people who received a caution or sentence has fallen by 81 per cent, and the number of young people sentenced to immediate custody has fallen by 74 per cent<sup>23</sup>. This 'shrinkage' in the youth justice system is the most significant headline from any analysis of recent trend data<sup>24</sup>. It is important to note, however, that while the number of young people coming into the system has significantly reduced, those 'left behind' in the justice system are typically more disadvantaged and more vulnerable<sup>25</sup>.

Research has found that those young people now entering the justice system for the first time are more likely to have greater and more complex needs<sup>26</sup>, with the 2017 *Drug Strategy* acknowledging that 'young people's drug misuse overlaps with a range of other vulnerabilities'<sup>27</sup>. For example, of those young people entering custody between April 2014 and March 2016 for whom their youth justice worker had 'substance misuse concerns', 70 per cent were not engaging in education, 43 per cent had mental health concerns, 42 per cent had suicide or self-harm concerns, 41 per cent were a looked after child prior to custody, and 37 per cent had learning disability or difficulty concerns<sup>28</sup>.

With this in mind, it is no surprise that the Public Health England evidence review of current provision found that the majority of professionals reported that they are seeing more young people with 'multiple vulnerabilities and complex needs' in specialist substance use treatment services<sup>29</sup>. In addition to this, the review raised the important point that 'multiple and complex vulnerabilities that may be hidden' when a young person first presents to a substance use service<sup>30</sup>. For example, a young person may be struggling to deal with adverse childhood experiences or unresolved trauma that they are not willing to disclose<sup>31</sup>.

### Abstinence or harm reduction?

It is generally accepted that substance use among young people is often problematic because of its relationship with other problems in the young person's life. Indeed, substance use is often a 'symptom rather than a cause' of a young person's vulnerability<sup>32</sup>. However, as with most young people, those involved in the justice system are unlikely to identify their own use as harmful or problematic<sup>33</sup>. In addition, in light of the vulnerabilities and complex needs highlighted above, for many young

people, any substance use-related problems they may have are likely to be viewed as 'trivial' in comparison<sup>34</sup>.

It is also important to bear in mind that not all substance use in adolescence is problematic<sup>35</sup>. Indeed, research has shown that substance use (in particular cannabis use) has become normalised among young people<sup>36</sup>. As Duke et al. found in their study of young people in contact with the justice system, 'many of these young people were smoking cannabis on a daily basis, while still managing to maintain engagement with school, college or their employment. ... Within their peer groups and family, cannabis and daily use of it was normalised'<sup>37</sup>.

When it comes to substance use among young people, the emphasis at a policy level is often on primary prevention and abstinence<sup>38</sup>. However, as the Advisory Council for the Misuse of Drugs point out, 'prevention actions should be justified on the basis of reducing long-term and meaningful adverse ... health and social outcomes. In this regard, it is important to be realistic about what prevention can achieve, and recognise that abstinence from drug use may not always be necessary to achieve these outcomes'<sup>39</sup>. Indeed, reducing the 'dangerousness' of a person's substance use should be accepted as a positive outcome<sup>40</sup>.

While adults entering substance use treatment services appear to prioritise abstinence over harm reduction<sup>41</sup>, because young people are unlikely to identify their own use as harmful or problematic<sup>42</sup>, there is less of an emphasis on abstinence. Indeed, with young people who are already using substances regularly, 'abstinence as a goal may not be always appropriate ... and a harm reduction approach is likely to be more achievable'<sup>43</sup>. Certainly the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction caution that 'interventions among vulnerable young people need to ... avoid rigid abstinence-orientated messages'<sup>44</sup>. Particularly as harm reduction approaches have been shown to be more effective when it comes to keeping young people engaged with services<sup>45</sup>, whereas an 'insistence on abstinence' may actually discourage engagement and retention<sup>46</sup>.

Before moving on to look at substance use interventions with young people involved in the justice system, it is worth pointing out that a Youth Rehabilitation Order (YRO) can have a 'drug treatment requirement' and/or an 'intoxicating substance<sup>1</sup> treatment requirement' attached<sup>47</sup>. Either of these requirements can be attached to a YRO if a direct link between a young person's substance use and their offending behaviour

has been identified. In both cases, the requirement needs to be 'recommended to the court as suitable for the offender by a member of a youth offending team'<sup>48</sup>, and the young person 'must submit, during a period or periods specified in the order, to treatment ... with a view to the reduction or elimination of the ... dependency on, or propensity to misuse, drugs'<sup>49</sup>.

## Substance use interventions with young people

In essence, substance use interventions are intended to prevent onset into different forms of substance use, reduce escalation into heavy use, and intervene to reduce problematic substance use<sup>50</sup>. However, it is worth noting that, because the majority of young people are not at the stage where they are dependent on substances, they require a response that focusses on 'preventing more problematic' use<sup>51</sup>. As outlined in the United Nations international standards on drug use prevention, this means that young people in the justice system require what are termed 'indicated' strategies i.e. those that target those who are already using substances and may be showing signs of problematic use, but not yet experiencing dependency<sup>52</sup>.

Substance use interventions with young people involved in the justice system 'need to be undertaken very carefully and expectations need to be tempered with realism. Getting young people to attend and listen to a drugs input may be an outcome in itself in these contexts'<sup>53</sup>. With this in mind, it is crucial to ensure that interventions are designed to engage and retain young people<sup>54</sup>. This is important because, as Hammersley et al. found in their study of nearly 300 young people involved with the justice system, the majority of those referred to a substance use treatment service did not feel that the help they received was useful<sup>55</sup>. This suggests that there is a 'considerable gap' between current substance use service provision for young people in the justice system and their service needs<sup>56</sup>. An issue not helped by the fact that there is a 'paucity of current research evidence' regarding best practice when it comes to effective interventions to address substance use within the youth justice cohort<sup>57</sup>.

When it comes to the actual design and delivery of substance use interventions with young people involved with the justice system, there a number of key points to bear in mind.

- Services need to ensure that they are accessible to young people<sup>58</sup>. Indeed, ensuring good access to

<sup>1</sup> Intoxicating substances are '(a) alcohol, or (b) any other substance or product (other than a drug) which is, or the fumes of which are,

capable of being inhaled or otherwise used for the purpose of causing intoxication (Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008, Section 24).

appropriate treatment services should be a key policy aim<sup>59</sup>.

- It is essential that any intervention is informed by an empirical assessment of the young people's needs<sup>60</sup>.
- Interventions that are delivered in an individual format are more beneficial than those delivered in a group format<sup>61</sup>. Despite young people themselves preferring peer group interventions<sup>62</sup>, according to the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, 'grouping together vulnerable young people with problem behaviour ... should be avoided'<sup>63</sup>. This can avoid counterproductive effects like norm narrowing and deviance modelling that might even increase substance use<sup>64</sup>.
- Interventions that are delivered across multiple sessions are more beneficial than those delivered through a single session<sup>65</sup>. For example, it has been found that, while a single session of motivational interviewing reduced substance use at the three-month follow-up stage<sup>66</sup>, these benefits were largely faded by 12 months<sup>67</sup>.
- Service providers should make appropriate use of technology, such as social media, to engage, maintain contact, and follow-up young people<sup>68</sup>.
- Young people in the justice system largely require 'indicated' strategies<sup>69</sup>. In practice, this means that many of the young people in the youth justice system need Tier 2 interventions, primarily aimed at reducing risks and vulnerabilities through the provision of information and advice<sup>70</sup>. However, it has been found that simply providing young people with information alone is not effective in changing substance use behaviours or attitudes<sup>71</sup>. Indeed, as Public Health England point out in their review of international evidence, one of the features of interventions that has been linked with negative outcomes is the giving of information alone<sup>72</sup>.
- Interventions which are not restricted to addressing substance use alone have been proven to be more effective, because they also address relevant needs that are connected to substance use<sup>73</sup>. There is also emerging evidence to suggest that interventions that address multiple risk behaviours are more cost effective than those that adopt a single domain focus, such as substance use<sup>74</sup>.
- It is essential that, where you have multiple agencies working with a young person, information sharing protocols are in place to facilitate multi-agency working<sup>75</sup>.
- Public Health England's recent evidence review found that 'services should, ... in addition to delivering interventions focused on the substance misuse itself, also develop young people's resilience, such as their life skills and their ability to make better choices and deal with difficulties'<sup>76</sup>. Indeed, according to the European Monitoring

Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction<sup>77</sup>, the rationale for all substance use interventions should be to improve the personal skills and resources of vulnerable people - to increase what has been termed resilience<sup>78</sup> - so that they may be better able to cope with their adverse social conditions. It is important to note that 'resilience does not necessarily mean removing risk - it means shoring up the resources for dealing with it'<sup>79</sup>. Indeed, an evaluation of the RISKIT-CJS intervention - a multi-component intervention to reduce substance use and risk taking behaviour in young people involved in the youth justice system<sup>80</sup> - found that young people particularly highlighted the preference for interventions that provided skills and strategies to manage risk<sup>81</sup>.

## Staff training and expertise

Training of staff that work with vulnerable young people, such as those involved with the justice system, 'must include both drug and alcohol misuse'<sup>82</sup>. Indeed, prior to the delivery of any intervention, staff training needs should be assessed, and staff members should be trained, to 'ensure that the programme is delivered to a high standard'<sup>83</sup>. For example, the Public Health England *Young people substance misuse commissioning support pack* notes that those staff responsible for delivering specialist interventions (such as cognitive behavioural therapy and/or motivational interviewing) need to be appropriately qualified and competent<sup>84</sup>.

The issue of staff training is particularly relevant when it comes to the question of who actually delivers substance use interventions to young people involved with the youth justice system: particularly Tier 2 interventions (as opposed to Tier 3 interventions)<sup>85</sup>. Should it be the responsibility of the youth justice service, or the responsibility of an external specialist substance use treatment service?

In relation to the former, Public Health England's evidence review concluded that, for young people to 'want to engage meaningfully with a service and achieve the best possible outcomes, they need time to work in a collaborative way, to build trust with their worker and have one worker who supports them around a range of needs'<sup>86</sup>. Similarly, Public Health England's support pack notes that a positive and trusting relationship between a young person and their keyworker can contribute significantly to that young person's wellbeing and positive outcomes<sup>87</sup>. Bearing in mind the multifaceted role of contemporary youth justice workers, and the relationships that they build with the young people they work with, it would make sense that the young person's



youth justice worker delivers any substance use intervention/s (particularly Tier 2 interventions).

An alternative scenario is the ‘appointment of dedicated drugs and youth justice workers, to work closely with or attached to youth justice teams, ... whose help will be available at all points of the youth justice system’<sup>88</sup>. While this may mean that a young person will work with more than one worker, and/or may not have the time to build up a positive and trusting relationship with a dedicated substance use worker, it would a) negate the need for all youth justice staff to be trained around substance use, while b) allowing the delivery of Tier 3 interventions on youth justice premises to those young people with more complex substance use needs.

## Service user involvement

The Children Act makes it clear that it is good practice with all young people to seek and consider their opinions about their circumstances and problems, along with ways of addressing them<sup>89</sup>. In recent years, there has been a shift with service user involvement becoming a key principle in the delivery of health and social care services<sup>90</sup>. Indeed, there is evidence of service user involvement across the full range of public services, not just social care and health<sup>91</sup>. While it has been argued that it is ‘particularly important within youth justice settings that the young person’s feelings and opinions are heard and given appropriate weight’<sup>92</sup>, in reality this has proved to be problematic; partly because of the difficulties retaining these young people in services, and partly because traditional service models do not focus on active engagement<sup>93</sup>. Yet it is precisely because of the fact that retention and engagement are a ‘particular challenge for services that manage those with the most complex needs’, that services need to ensure that they adapt their provision to ‘facilitate engagement and promote continued contact’<sup>94</sup>.

In theory, service user involvement should involve those who use services being consulted, included and working together from the start to the end of any intervention that affects them<sup>95</sup>. However, it is crucial to note that service user involvement goes beyond simply consulting young people<sup>96</sup>. It emphasises doing things ‘with’ young people, as opposed to doing things ‘to’ or ‘for’ young people. In essence, it is ‘strengths-based approach, which recognises that all ... young people ... have their own set of skills, knowledge and experiences which they can bring to the table’<sup>97</sup>.

In addition, it is important to remember that service user involvement is not an end in itself, but rather a way of strengthening accountability to all stakeholders, developing and delivering services that genuinely

respond to the needs of users, and fostering a sense of ownership and trust among users<sup>98</sup>. By becoming more ‘suitable’ to users, services thereby become ‘more attractive to new users’<sup>99</sup>. Furthermore, research has found that those users who felt that they had been involved were ‘more satisfied with their treatment, had stayed in treatment for longer, and reported a range of positive subjective and objective drug and lifestyle outcomes’<sup>100</sup>. With all of this in mind, it is unsurprising that Public Health England ‘continues to recognise the essential and developing role played by both current and ex-service users in the development of effective treatment and recovery services’<sup>101</sup>.

While the value of service user involvement is clear, it needs to be acknowledged that when it comes to implementing it in practice, there are difficulties. For example: a service’s entrenched policy and practice can often limit the scale to which users’ views are actually taken on board; limited resources, especially in a time of austerity, can restrict a service’s capacity to meet users’ demands; service users may have unrealistic demands; and, particularly in the case of those young people involved in the justice system, there may be a general lack of interest in becoming involved<sup>102</sup>.



## Chapter 3 - Methodology

The research was conducted over a four-month period between September and December 2018. The research utilised a mixed-methods approach incorporating a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods.

### Interviews with staff and young people

One-to-one interviews formed the basis of this research study. In total, 23 interviews were undertaken, including: 15 interviews with staff from across the North Youth Justice, South Youth Justice, Intensive Supervision and Surveillance (ISS), and Court Teams; five interviews with staff from Eclipse and Change, Grow, Live (CGL); and, three interviews with young people who had been referred to Eclipse by one of the above youth justice teams<sup>ii</sup>.

### Secondary data analysis

Youth Justice Service data from the ChildView system was provided for all young people who had an active intervention between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018. The data included basic demographic information (e.g. age, gender) and details about the interventions themselves (e.g. start/end date, type, and outcome). In addition to this, data was also provided for the following questions:

- was a referral to a drug/alcohol service recorded on ChildView?<sup>iii</sup>;
- was 'Eclipse' mentioned explicitly in the 'contacts section' of ChildView?<sup>iv</sup>; and,
- if an Asset+ assessment was undertaken, what were the responses to the substance use-related questions?<sup>v</sup>

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<sup>ii</sup> The low number of interviews with young people was the result of a combination of the low referral numbers to Eclipse, and the low number of young people who actually agreed to be interviewed as part of the research.

<sup>iii</sup> These cases were very limited in number due to the recording practices at the time.

<sup>iv</sup> This search of the data was undertaken to provide a more accurate assessment of whether or not the young person was involved with Eclipse (or at least the case manager was concerned enough substance use issues to mention Eclipse in the case notes).

<sup>v</sup> This data was limited because a large portion of the assessments were undertaken using the old Asset tool, for which a search could not be run.

## Chapter 4 - Findings

### Profile of those in the youth justice system

While the 'shrinkage' in the youth justice system over the last decade is the most significant headline from any analysis of recent trend data<sup>103</sup>, it is important to acknowledge that those young people 'left behind' in the justice system are typically more vulnerable and more disadvantaged<sup>104</sup>. Indeed, research has found that those young people now entering the youth justice system for the first time are more likely to have greater and more complex needs<sup>105</sup>. These findings were supported by the majority of the youth justice service staff interviewed for this research study.

*'The caseloads appear smaller, but they are more complex. So, the staff may have a caseload of eleven, but the complexity of those cases, and I mean real complexity, means it's almost double the amount.'* (YJS 1)

*'When the new youth caution came in ... it diverted a lot of people away, and [so did] the restorative justice the police are now doing on the streets. ... So we are left [with] the real core high-risk [young] people.'* (YJS 8)

*'Our first time entrants have reduced, but we are getting more complex, more serious high-risk prolific offenders coming through our doors'* (YJS 11)

*'The caseloads have gone down, but young people are so much more complex.'* (YJS 13)

It has been shown that young people's substance use often overlaps with other vulnerabilities and risk factors<sup>106</sup>. Indeed, a young person's substance can be a sign of other problems in that young person's life<sup>107</sup>. It is unsurprising then that the 2017 Public Health England review found evidence of 'multiple vulnerabilities and complex needs' among those young people working with specialist substance misuse services<sup>108</sup>. As highlighted in the quotes below, the complex relationship between risk factors for offending, adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), and substance use was acknowledged by both the youth justice service staff and the Eclipse staff in this study.

*'It [substance use] is generally one of many risk factors.'* (YJS 5)

*'If we started to talk about ACEs with some of these [young] people, they would have experienced four or more.'* (Eclipse 1)

*'What we see in [the young people involved with] the YOS is social deprivation, poor family structures, high levels of criminality, high levels of vulnerability, substance misuse: ... multiple complexities.'* (YJS 3)

*'Very often it's complex family circumstances, ... so they might have witnessed domestic violence, parental mental health needs, parental substance use, [and] parents that struggle with parenting in general.'* (YJS 8)

The view that substance use is often a 'symptom rather than a cause' of vulnerability<sup>109</sup> was supported by the respondents in this study, as was the view that a young person's substance use could be evidence of that young person trying to deal with unresolved trauma<sup>110</sup>.

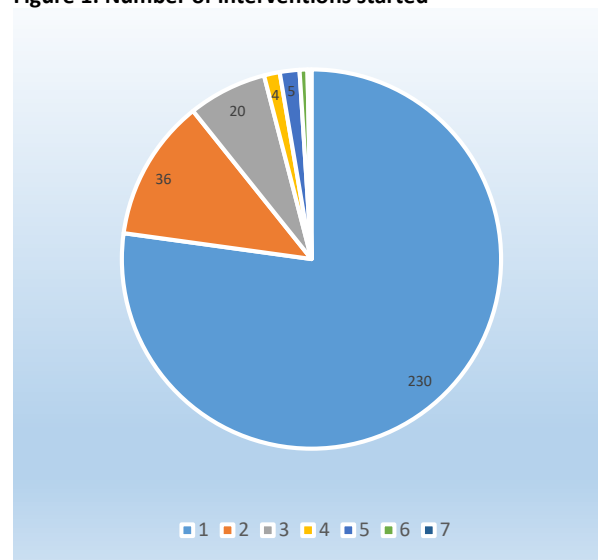
*'The substances aren't the main issue. It's why they are using substances.'* (YJS 14)

*'Quite often the substance misuse is a symptom of something a lot deeper.'* (Eclipse 1)

*'You need to find out the reason why they are doing it [using substances]. ... A lot of them are masking traumas they have dealt with in their lives, or not dealt with.'* (Eclipse 4)

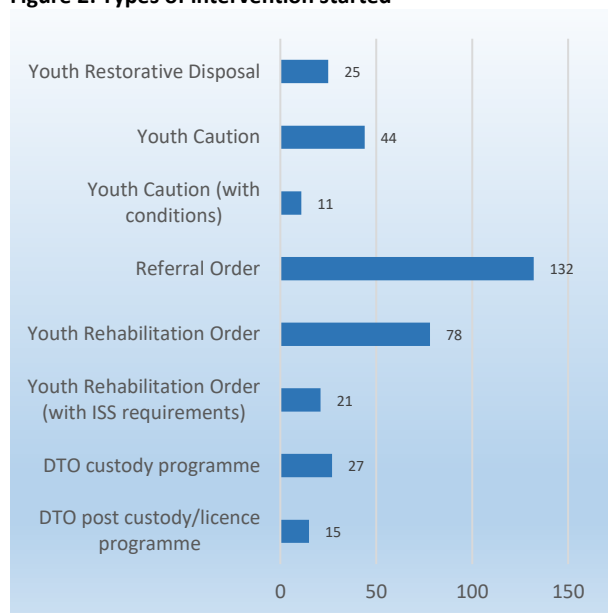
Between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018, a total of 298 young people started a youth justice intervention with the Manchester youth justice service. As shown below (see Figure 1), just over three quarters (n=230) of these young people started just one intervention during this period. In line with the finding that those now entering the youth justice system have greater and more complex needs than those in previous years<sup>111</sup>, over a fifth of the young people started two (n=36) or more (n=20) interventions during this 12-month period.

Figure 1: Number of interventions started



A total of 422 interventions were started between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018. Nearly a third of these (n=132) were Referral Orders, nearly a quarter (n=99) were Youth Rehabilitation Orders, and a tenth (n=44) were Youth Cautions (see Figure 2 overleaf).

**Figure 2: Types of intervention started**



## Substances used by young people

Despite evidence of a general decline in the number of young people reported to be using drugs and alcohol over the last decade<sup>112</sup>, this had not been a universal reduction. For example, those involved with the youth justice system are one group of young people that have repeatedly been identified as having a greater risk of substance use than young people in general<sup>113</sup>. Indeed, a number of youth justice service staff felt that some form of substance use was evident in nearly all of the young people that they had previously worked with.

*'I can't remember the last young person I met who doesn't use some kind of substance.'* (YJS 11)

*'It's rare that I meet with someone and they don't use some kind of substance.'* (YJS 8)

These quotes, however, were not substantiated by the secondary analysis of the quantitative data provided by Manchester youth justice service. The analysis of the ChildView data revealed that, out of the 225 young people who had an Asset+ assessment undertaken, only around two thirds (n=146) had some form of 'response' to the substance misuse related questions. Of these, three quarters (n=109) were assessed as 'currently using' substances at the time of their Asset+ assessment. A fifth (n=30) were assessed as 'having previously used' substances, and for seven of the young people, substance use was 'suspected' at time of assessment. The reason for the disparity between what youth justice staff reported (in terms of an almost universal use of substances among the youth justice cohort), and the Asset+ data, is not clear. It could be an indication of a young person not feeling comfortable enough with their worker at the time of their

assessment to disclose any substance use, or perhaps evidence of the transition to Asset+ (in terms of youth justice staff becoming familiar with the new tool).

Interestingly, of the 109 young people who were assessed as 'currently using' substances at the time of their Asset+ assessment, over two thirds (n=75) were only using one drug. For four fifths (n=61) of these young people, this substance was cannabis. In terms of other substances, five young people were using alcohol, four cocaine, two new psychoactive substances, two tobacco, and one Ecstasy/MDMA. When it comes to poly drug use, a fifth of the young people (n=22) were using two substances, and over a tenth (n=12) were using three or more substances (three substances n=10, four substances n=2). Of the 22 young people who were assessed as using two drugs, nearly half (n=10) were using cannabis and alcohol, and nearly a quarter (n=5) were using cannabis and tobacco.

The 2016 *Smoking, drinking and drug use among young people in England* schools survey found that pupils were more likely to have taken cannabis than any other drug<sup>114</sup>. This was reflected in the annual young people's statistics from the National Drug Treatment Monitoring Service which showed that, in 2016-17, 88 per cent of young people reported either primary or adjunctive cannabis use<sup>115</sup>. As shown in Table 1 below, this figure remained the same in 2017-18<sup>116</sup>. Despite the reported use of cannabis being slightly lower in Manchester when compared to the national figure, cannabis was still the most prevalent substance reported by those in specialist substance misuse services in the city.

**Table 1: Substances cited by those receiving specialist substance misuse services (2017-18)**

Substances *	Local (n=184)	National (n=15467)
	%	%
Cannabis	83% (n=152)	88% (n=13625)
Alcohol	42% (n=78)	47% (n=7206)
Cocaine	5% (n=9)	10% (n=1487)
Ecstasy	8% (n=14)	14% (n=2098)
NPS	8% (n=14)	2% (n=277)
Nicotine	17% (n=32)	17% (n=2603)

\* Figures are of young people in specialist substance misuse community services year to date. Substances cited are from any episode for the young person in the year (any citation in drug 1, 2 or 3). Individuals may have cited more than one problematic substance so percentages may sum to more than 100%.

In line with the analysis of the ChildView data from Manchester youth justice service, and the data presented above in Table 1, those interviewed for this study reported the high prevalence of cannabis use.

*'In the city, it's primarily cannabis.'* (Eclipse 2)

*'Cannabis use is almost 99.9 per cent of the young people, and they use it on a regular basis.'* (YJS 1)

*'It is very rare, I am trying to think of a case, where I have seen someone who does not smoke cannabis.'* (YJS 14)

As would be expected from Table 1, while other substances were reported by the respondents in this study, they were at much lower prevalence levels than cannabis. For example, alcohol appeared to be used less frequently among the young people involved in the justice system. The same goes for class A drugs like cocaine and heroin. Interestingly, the use of synthetic cannabinoid receptor agonists (more commonly known as 'Spice') appears to have decreased in the last couple of years. It is likely that this is the result of the *Psychoactive Substances Act* that was introduced in May 2016<sup>117</sup>, and the negative media reporting of 'Spice' related incidents in the city.

*'Alcohol we don't see as much, ... people will say just on special occasions or if they go to a party, or something like that. Other drugs I would say are a bit more rare. ... So cocaine and things like that, occasionally I get that, ... and then the odd person who uses Spice.'* (YJS 8)

*'I don't see that many cocaine, heroin. I think that tends to be more if there has been criminal exploitation and they [the young person] have been found dealing. ... We have had a lot of young people who have been under the influence of Spice, ... but it has been quite stable for a good 18 months.'* (YJS 6)

*'There's not so much Spice now. I think there has almost become, a lot of young people have said to me, a shame factor, because of the scenes around the city centre, associated with it.'* (YJS 13)

The most recent statistics from Public Health England show that the number of young people who had problems with benzodiazepines at the start of treatment almost doubled (from 161 in 2016/17 to 315 in 2017/18), with the biggest increase in the use of Xanax<sup>118</sup>. This finding was reflected by nearly all of those interviewed for this study.

*'Xanax is definitely on the rise.'* (Eclipse 4)

*'We have had a lot of young people using Xanax.'* (YJS 6)

*'Xanax is a big one now. I think that is the one that has taken over with young people.'* (Eclipse 5)

Before moving on to look at the normalisation of cannabis among the young people involved with the youth justice service in Manchester, it is worth noting that, for a number of respondents, Xanax was viewed as more problematic than cannabis. As will be discussed later in this chapter, this was partly down to young people having very limited knowledge about Xanax and its effects. However, as highlighted in the quote below, it was also the result of the fact that the use of Xanax appears to lead to more acute problems than cannabis.

*'Xanax is the more problematic drug [when compared to cannabis]. It's wiping people out. I've seen more psychiatric emergencies from Xanax than I have from chronic use of cannabis. I think cannabis has that sort of long-lasting effect, but Xanax is causing us acute problems.'* (YJS 3)

Research has consistently shown that, among some groups of young people, the use of cannabis has become normalised<sup>119</sup>. Indeed, in their study of young people involved with the justice system, Duke et al. found that many of the young people were smoking cannabis on a daily basis, and within their peer groups and family, daily use of cannabis was normalised<sup>120</sup>: a finding that was mirrored in this study.

*'Cannabis is very much normalised amongst kids within youth justice.'* (YJS 4)

*'Some people are just, "What's the big deal? It's what my mates do, it's what everyone does". So it's normalised for some people, totally normalised.'* (YJS 10)

*'If you're brought up in an environment with cannabis all around you - on the telly, in the music, on people's t-shirts, on lighters, on caps, your parents using it, your cousins, your friends - it's just part of everyday life, isn't it?'* (Eclipse 5)

*'I smoke [cannabis] from morning to night.'* (YP 2)

Cannabis use is so normalised among some young people involved in the justice system that, as highlighted in the quotes below, for some, it is not even seen as a drug.

*'There are instances where I am saying, "Do you use any substances?", and they're, like, "No". But then you will find out they smoke cannabis, and they just don't see it as a drug.'* (YJS 8)

*'[I: What substances do you use?] I don't take no drugs, I just smoke weed. That is it.'* (YP 1)

Indeed, for many of the young people, the use of cannabis is a central part of their identity. When this is combined with the fact that cannabis use is not viewed as a problem, and in some instances use is thought to have positive health benefits, the issue to trying to get young people involved in the justice system to address their cannabis use becomes all the more difficult.

*'Lots and lots of young people are using cannabis and they say, for them, it's a positive part of their identity.'* (YJS 7)

*'The mentality of it is that it [cannabis] is not a problem.'* (YJS 15)

*'But they have also heard, or seen, or been told, a lot of positive things about cannabis use. Like, "Do you know it can get rid of pain? Do you know it's good for this and it doesn't have as many harmful effects as alcohol?" So, yeah, that definitely makes it [working with young people to address their cannabis use] more difficult.'* (YJS 8)

While the use of cannabis among those young people involved in the justice system appears to be normalised, a number of the youth justice service staff felt that they themselves were not helping the issue. As evidenced in the quotes below, it appears that staff are so 'desensitised' to the use of substances - in particular cannabis - that they do not perhaps give it the attention that it warrants.

*'[I: Do you think cannabis is almost normalised?] Yeah, and I think over the years we [youth justice service staff] have grown to be part of that normalisation. When we do an assessment, a young person will say quite openly, "I am using cannabis", and I feel we don't assess it as if it was serious, we assess it as normal. ... So, I think we need to change the way we normalise it and make it more of a concern, and express that to the child.'* (YJS 1)

*'My view is that there has become a laissez-faire attitude [among youth justice service staff] towards substances. It is almost as if it's a given that anyone who comes through [the justice system] is taking at the very least cannabis.'* (YJS 14)

## Referrals to Eclypse

Public Health England's 2017 evidence review of current provision highlighted a decline in the number of young people entering specialist substance use services<sup>121</sup>. This decline has been mirrored by a reduction in the proportion of referrals to specialist substance use services from the youth justice service, with referrals falling from 39 per cent in 2010-11, to 26 per cent in 2015-16<sup>122</sup>, and 23 per cent in 2017/18<sup>123</sup>. Bearing in mind the links between substance use and offending behaviour outlined at the start of this chapter, this reduction is surprising. However, it is likely that the decline in referrals from the youth justice service can be largely accounted for by the significant reduction in the size of the youth justice system itself over the last decade or so<sup>124</sup>.

What cannot be accounted for by the reduction in the size of the youth justice system as a whole, though, is the comparatively low proportion of referrals from the youth justice service in Manchester. As shown in Table 2 below, only 11 per cent of referrals into specialist substance misuse services - in this instance, Eclypse - came from the youth justice service, compared to the national figure of 23 per cent<sup>125</sup>.

**Table 2: Referral source to specialist substance misuse services (2017-18)**

Referral source	Local (n=102) %	National (n=11204) %
Youth justice	11% (n=11)	23% (n=2549)

It is clear that the low number of referrals to Eclypse from the youth justice service in Manchester was not a

result of a low level of need with regards to substance use. For example, the quantitative data showed that, between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018, only eight young people had a recorded referral to a drug/alcohol service on Childview. Yet, in sharp contrast, the word 'Eclipse' was found mentioned in the case notes of 106 (36 per cent) of the 298 young people who started a youth justice intervention between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018. Furthermore, additional analysis of the ChildView data revealed that, out of the 225 young people who had an Asset+ assessment undertaken between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018, 109 (48 per cent) were assessed as 'currently using' substances at the time of their assessment. This high level of reported substance use need was also identified by one of the youth justice service respondents.

*'At the time, I think from their side they [Eclipse] had 11 young people that were on our records that they were working with. I then did a screening of our young people and looked at our assessments - we have to tick whether there are substance misuse concerns or not - and it came up to something like 110.'* (YJS 12)

It would therefore appear that the low proportion of referrals from the youth justice service identified in Table 2 was the result of a low number of referrals to Eclypse, as opposed to a low level of need with regards to substance use. The remainder of this referrals section will go on to investigate some of the reasons for the low number of referrals, before moving on to discuss the changes to working practice that were made in August 2018 to address the referral issues outlined above.

*'All young people should be offered the opportunity to engage with Eclipse. Eclipse don't have a threshold with us. ... They have made it quite clear they are willing to do that [see anyone].'* (YJS 6)

Despite the fact that, in principle, Eclypse agree to work with any young person that is referred to them from the youth justice service, in practice, referrals to Eclypse were hindered by historically poor referral procedures and informal working practices.

*'Historically it was very much the youth justice service would identify the [young] person and then they may or may not refer them into Eclipse, and Eclipse may or may not pick them up. ... It wasn't tight and it wasn't very friendly with regards to sharing the data, information collecting, [and] doing things inter-partnership.'* (Eclypse 1)

*'We had people going into the YOT and it was a very informal referral system. So, it was a case of, "I have got these young people coming into day", and the Eclipse worker might have an intervention with one of them. ... And likewise, YOT was making referrals in that unstructured, informal way.'* (Eclypse 2)



*'Because [youth justice service] staff haven't felt Eclipse has worked brilliantly [in the past] ... they have probably dwindled off in terms of making referrals.'* (YJS 6)

The issue of low referrals to Eclipse was further compounded by the fact that, historically, Eclipse was viewed solely as a substance use service that young people engaged with voluntarily. Because of this, many youth justice service respondents talked of not making a referral to Eclipse until the young person themselves had consented to engage with the service. As evidenced above in the analysis of the ChildView data, it would appear that despite nearly half of the young people who had an Asset+ assessment being identified by their youth justice worker as 'currently using' substances, only a fraction agreed to be referred to Eclipse.

*'We can only do that [refer them to Eclipse] with the young person's consent, because obviously it's classed as a voluntary intervention.'* (YJS 9)

With these issues in mind, it was clear that changes need to be made to both the referral procedures, and the multi-agency working practices between the youth justice service and Eclipse. Since August 2018, a number of small, but significant, changes have been made (and continue to be made). To date, these have included the establishment of a multi-agency substance use working group, an increase in the number of days an Eclipse worker is based in the youth justice service offices in Longsight and Cheetham Hill, and the introduction of a substance use screening tool to be used by youth justice staff at initial assessment.

*'[To address low referrals] we have got the [substance use] working group now. They will be meeting more frequently with the Eclipse team, and from a frontline operational perspective, you know, "What is the blockage? Are we getting the referrals we want? What do we want done differently?"'* (YJS 7)

*'We've moved things along a lot in the last couple of months. We now have increased the amount of days that Eclipse staff are based here [in the youth justice service offices], ... so it's just a little bit more of an integrated way of working.'* (YJS 12)

*'They [Eclipse] have given us a bit of a screening tool ... as a prompt for [youth justice service] staff. So when staff fill in the substance use section on Asset+, there's a bit of guidance [on the tool] for them to ask those questions, ... so those questions won't need to be asked again.'* (YJS 12)

In addition to the above changes, Eclipse staff have now been given access to the youth justice service ChildView system. Not only does this allow youth justice staff to make referrals straight to Eclipse via ChildView, but it also enables the Eclipse staff to see all the other information about the young person, thereby giving them a better understanding of the young person's behaviour and needs.

*'Now we have just got an automatic referral, so the referral goes from Childview straight over to the Eclipse worker who picks it up.'* (Eclipse 1)

*'It [access to ChildView] makes the referral process easier. Rather than sitting there doing a lengthy referral form, now we can just refer on the referral tab within Childview.'* (YJS 12)

*'They [Eclipse] now have access to our Childview, so they can read up on [our] assessments. ... That helps support how the work is going to be done with the young person. So Eclipse have a better understanding of the needs of the young person.'* (YJS 1)

*'[When a referral has been made] the Eclipse practitioner gets a notification, and instantaneously they've got access to that young person's records and any information that they might need.'* (YJS 12)

Perhaps more significantly, though, is the change in the youth justice service's referral 'thresholds' to Eclipse. As described in detail in the quote below, since August 2018, there has been a conscious shift away from engagement with Eclipse being viewed as purely voluntary (as was the case pre-August 2018), to engagement being compulsory (in those cases where there is a direct link between substance use and offending). The issue of attaching specific requirements to a young person's Youth Rehabilitation Order will be discussed further in the section below.

*'We are working through three particular referral pathways in [to Eclipse]. ... There will be a voluntary level, which is if young people choose to do that [engage with Eclipse]. But then, the next tier up is where there is a direct link between offending and substance use. Then it [engaging with Eclipse] becomes statutory. It is non-negotiable. ... The third tier ... is a Youth Rehabilitation Order where it's got different requirements you can attach, one of them being a [drug] treatment requirement. ... So at the point where we're doing pre-sentence reports, ... at that stage, that's when I'm expecting staff to liaise with Eclipse about what that [drug treatment] requirement will look like in practice and propose that as a requirement. It's not been done yet but that's what we're doing moving forward.'* (YJS 12)

The sum outcome of all these changes has been a sudden surge in the number of referrals made to Eclipse. Indeed, the most recent Quarterly Performance Management Framework Report (for Q2 2018-19) from Eclipse noted that: 'Youth criminal justice referrals are on a significant increase (by 200%).'

*'The increase [in referrals] that we've seen this quarter, I think that is a direct effect of all the processes [that have been put in place] in the last couple of months. ... So this quarter, for example, we had 17 referrals from criminal justice. This is the highest we've had for as long as I've been in post.'* (Eclipse 3)

## Voluntary or compulsory?

*'It needs to be consensual, because otherwise what's the point? [Even if engaging with Eclipse is compulsory], if they're not going to engage [once they're there], it's wasting everybody's time.'* (YJS 10)

As touched on in the preceding section, prior to the changes that commenced in August 2018, engagement with Eclipse was on a purely voluntary basis. As highlighted in the quotes below, the result of this was that, despite a youth justice worker wanting to refer a young person to Eclipse, the voluntary nature of the intervention meant that many young people chose not to engage with the service.

*'Prior to the [August 2018] changes, you just couldn't engage a young person in Eclipse, because they knew it was voluntary. ... They didn't have to do it, and we couldn't make them do it.'* (YJS 4)

*'It was very much they [the youth justice service] were saying, "It's voluntary and you don't have to go". You tell a young person that, then they aren't going to go.'* (Eclipse 1)

*'When we used to say it [seeing Eclipse] was voluntary there was a zero take up. Clearly that doesn't work for young people.'* (YJS 1)

*'I don't have an issue with referring onto Eclipse, ... [but] I can't do that without some sort of agreement [from the young person].'* (YJS 3)

As previously mentioned, as a direct result of this lack of engagement, changes to the referral pathways were made in August 2018. For those young people whose offending behaviour is identified as being linked to their substance use, engagement with Eclipse is now integrated into a young person's statutory supervision sessions.

*'We, as a service, have revisited what we are saying and what we are doing. ... We are not saying, "It's voluntary" anymore, those words have disappeared. It is about your assessment. "You have been assessed and this [substance use] is your need as part of your assessment".'* (YJS 1)

*'I tend not to use the word voluntary. ... It's more around, "You have got substance misuse problems, or your offending is directly linked to substances. Therefore, I am going to refer you to Eclipse and I would like you to meet with them on one occasion and we will go from there".'* (YJS 4)

*'When we say, "This [seeing Eclipse] is part of your order and we will count it as one of your appointments", you get a much better buy-in.'* (YJS 8)

*'[I: How did you end up working with Eclipse?] She [my youth justice service worker] just said to me I am going to go in a meeting with someone from Eclipse because it's part of my order.'* (YP 1)

Some youth justice service staff felt that all the young people they work with, as a matter of course, should meet with Eclipse, irrespective of whether or not they have substance use issues, or their offending is directly linked to their substance use.

*'I feel as though Eclipse needs to be a more integral part of our induction. So when we get young people in and we are doing an induction onto their order with them, it actually comes as part of their order that everybody meets Eclipse and has that conversation.'* (YJS 6)

*'I think if all young people knew that as a matter of course - young people, they like consistency - it's part of your order with us that you have one interview with an Eclipse worker. It happens to everyone, that is the way it works. ... Then it's not discriminatory, you know, it's not because you did this offence or because you have said whatever, it's because everyone does it [sees Eclipse].'* (YJS 14)

However, as highlighted in the quote below, it was noted that once seeing Eclipse is written into young people's supervision plan, then these sessions should be compulsory and attendance enforceable.

*'My feelings are it [working with Eclipse] should be treated equally [to working with the youth justice service] because they [Eclipse] are taking our statutory appointments away, so really it should be enforceable and it should be statutory.'* (YJS 12)

As outlined in Chapter 2, those young people subject to a Youth Rehabilitation Order - which, as shown in Figure 2 above, was around a quarter of those that started a youth justice intervention between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018 - can have either a 'drug treatment requirement' or an 'intoxicating substance treatment requirement' attached to their order<sup>126</sup>. Yet despite this provision within the *Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008*, prior to August 2018, attaching either of these requirements to a Youth Rehabilitation Order was an approach that was not adopted in Manchester. The rationale for this was not clear.

*'[I: Some of the other YOT staff were saying you can't get a drug treatment requirement attached to your YRO in Manchester. What is the thinking behind that?] I have no idea.'* (YJS 1)

*'What we weren't using is the orders [YRO requirements] that could be given which mandates that young person to access service provision. They just weren't being used. ... I didn't understand that.'* (Eclipse 1)

For some staff, a lack of knowledge around exactly what a 'drug treatment requirement' or an 'intoxicating substance treatment requirement' entailed was the primary reason for them not attaching either of these requirements to a Youth Rehabilitation Order.



*'I don't think anyone has had the confidence to actually put it [a drug treatment requirement] forward. [I: Why is that?] Because for me personally, I don't know enough about the requirement. I don't think we have been given enough information to put that to the court like we would with [for example] the curfew requirement. ... I don't know enough about a drug requirement. I don't know how it works, I don't know who supervises it, or how long it's for.'* (YJS 4)

Before moving on to look at the tricky question of whether or not substance use treatment services like Eclipse should adopt an abstinence-focussed approach, as opposed to a harm reduction-focussed approach when working with young people, it is important to highlight a number of concerns that were raised by staff with regards to making engagement with Eclipse compulsory.

*'I think with young people, if you say, "You have to attend", ... that could alter the relationship with the Eclipse worker and actually be quite damaging. Because it's something that they have to do.'* (Eclipse 2)

*'[I: They're now saying it's mandatory that some supervision sessions are now with an Eclipse worker ...] I don't think that it would go down well. I think if we started to enforce it to that extent that, "You have to", that would probably effect that young person's engagement, ... because it would be like a form of enforcement.'* (YJS 9)

*'From my experience, I just think any young person, just that time in their life, if you tell them, "You have to do this", it's just going to push them the wrong way.'* (YJS 10)

*'I think that, if you are going into an interview with a young person, and you are telling them they have got to do it, then you are going to put a young person's back up straight away, aren't you?'* (YJS 4)

## Abstinence or harm reduction?

*'In an ideal world, obviously, it would be abstinence, but in a realistic world, it's harm reduction.'* (YJS 8)

As outlined in Chapter 2, when it comes to substance use among young people, the emphasis at a policy level is often on primary prevention and abstinence<sup>127</sup>. However, as the Advisory Council for the Misuse of Drugs point out, it is important to recognise that abstinence from substance use may not always be necessary to reduce the adverse health and social outcomes associated with substance use<sup>128</sup>. Indeed, reducing the 'dangerousness' of a person's substance use should be accepted as a positive outcome<sup>129</sup>. In addition to this, is the harsh reality that, for young people who are already using substances regularly, harm reduction is likely to be 'more achievable' than abstinence<sup>130</sup>.

*'If you get abstinence in a young person you have done extremely well. ... I have worked with hundreds of young people and there have been [only] four or five [who have managed to abstain].'* (Eclipse 5)

*'We are under no illusion that young people are going to stop using [substances] whilst they're with us. They're not ready to change. They're too young. They don't understand the implications. It's about making sure that they're using safely and responsibly, to the best of our ability.'* (YJS 12)

*'They [Eclipse] can't make you stop [using substances]. Whatever you want to do, that is what you do.'* (YP 2)

Furthermore, harm reduction approaches have been shown to be more effective when it comes to keeping young people engaged with services<sup>131</sup>. Indeed, it has been found that an 'insistence on abstinence' may actually discourage engagement and retention<sup>132</sup>. These findings were echoed by the respondents in this study.

*'We would always want young people to abstain, but we have got to work with that person and we are just going to repel them by saying, "It's abstinence or nothing". We have got to be realistic. ... We live in a real world and if we want to engage with [young] people that might mean we have to those conversations about, "What positive steps can we make? What is achievable for you? How are you going to keep yourself safe?"'* (Eclipse 1)

*'In the back of our heads we will always have that [notion that] actually abstinence is better [than harm reduction] ... but we cannot pressure any young person. It won't work, because actually they will disengage.'* (Eclipse 3)

*'It's really hard again to get any buy-in when they [young people] are like, "I am not meeting with someone, they can't stop me from doing this". And it's like, "No, it's not about that, it's about making sure you know the information". ... So I would say 99 per cent of the time, I am trying to sell it [Eclipse] as a harm reduction thing.'* (YJS 8)

As alluded to in the final quote above, many of the young people involved with the justice system are labouring under the misconception that Eclipse is solely an abstinence-focussed service. It is clear that, going forwards, work needs to be undertaken (by both Eclipse and the youth justice service) to address this widely held misconception among young people. This will ultimately positively impact upon young people's engagement levels.

*'They [young people] think that they are going to go along [to Eclipse] and be told, "You have got to stop". When actually it's not about that, unless you want to stop. It's about education, it's about harm reduction, ... and it's about keeping yourself safe.'* (YJS 4)

*'[I: Is it in their minds that Eclipse are going to make them abstain?] Yeah, and they just think, "I am not going to stop, so there is no point [in engaging with Eclipse]".'* (YJS 9)

*'That is what Eclipse want you to do. [I: You think Eclipse want you to stop?] Yeah, they will try and convince me to stop smoking [cannabis]'. (YP 1)*

## Interventions offered by Eclipse

While a significant proportion of young people involved with the justice system in Manchester may be already using substances, many are not yet experiencing dependency. Because of this, they require 'indicated' strategies<sup>133</sup> aimed at preventing more problematic use<sup>134</sup>. As can be seen in Table 3 below, when it comes to the types of interventions that Eclipse offers, the vast majority of young people who engaged with the service received harm reduction advice, a psychosocial intervention, and/or a multi-agency response<sup>135</sup>. Interestingly, when compared to what is delivered nationally, all three of these types of intervention are delivered to a higher proportion of young people in Manchester. This could be an indication of a higher level of need among those young people engaged with Eclipse in Manchester.

**Table 3: Interventions delivered by specialist substance misuse services (2017-18)**

Intervention #	Local (n=184) %	National (n=15467) %
Harm reduction	84% (n=155)	60% (n=9351)
Pharmacological	0% (n=0)	0% (n=64)
Psychosocial	100% (n=184)	91% (n=14062)
Multi-agency working	88% (n=161)	60% (n=9231)

<sup>a</sup> Overview of intervention figures are out of YP accessing specialist substance misuse services in the year to date period. An individual may have received more than one intervention type so percentages may sum to more than 100%.

*'A brief intervention is [where] a young person might say, "I'm all right, I'm not really that interested." So, we will be giving them some harm minimisation advice, some information which is pertinent to their circumstances. And that might be it, just a one-off intervention. ... [But at the other extreme] there could be other people where we would be working with them for three or four months on a one-to-one basis, ... or for longer than that, if they have got higher levels of use and higher levels of complexity. So it can vary, from a one-off session to up to four to six months.' (Eclipse 2)*

As outlined in the above quote, the interventions offered by Eclipse can range from one-off sessions aimed primarily at harm reduction, through to much more in-depth long-term interventions aimed at addressing multiple needs and vulnerabilities. When it comes to brief one-off interventions, as outlined in the quotes below, these mainly involved the provision of information regarding substances and their effects.

*'We mainly have brief interventions. ... So different kinds of interventions in regards to education and prevention, in order to raise awareness of effects and consequences of drug use.' (Eclipse 3)*

*'It [Eclipse] helps you in a way knowing what is in things, what is in different drugs that people could be taking. [I: And is that knowledge helpful?] Yeah, it just helps. You know what you are taking then. So, like I said, she [the Eclipse worker] told me what was inside lean and Xanax. "Nah mate, it's not for me". I didn't know that before. If I knew it before, I would never have taken them.' (YP 2)*

*'I just closed a case recently where the young person is using cannabis. He doesn't want to change, and he is quite happy with his cannabis use, he enjoys it, he likes it. My job then is to say, "Right, okay, I just want to make you more aware of the dangers around cannabis". So, it would just be a one-off session about the link to mental health and things like that.' (Eclipse 4)*

*'[I: If a young person engages maybe once or twice for a brief intervention, what do they get? Is it mainly information?] Yes, education. ... We will provide information on the substance.' (Eclipse 3)*

While there is evidence in the young person's quote above to show that young people do appear to value the provision of information, research has shown that the provision of information alone is not effective per se in changing substance use behaviours and/or attitudes<sup>136</sup>. Indeed, as Public Health England note, one of the features of interventions that has been linked with negative outcomes is the giving of information alone<sup>137</sup>. The quote below from a young person highlights this issue clearly.

*'I don't think Eclipse just telling people about the drugs is going to make them stop.' (YP 1)*

In addition to this, research has also found that multiple sessions are more effective than one-off sessions in terms of reducing substance use in the longer-term<sup>138</sup>. This highlights the importance of Eclipse ensuring that, where possible, the sessions they deliver are geared towards retaining young people for more than a single one-off session.

*'We would deliver brief interventions primarily on a one-to-one basis with young people rather than a group programme, although that is something we are looking to develop. ... I think there is scope in the YOTs to do some group interventions.' (Eclipse 2)*

As noted in the quote above, in addition to the group interventions already offered to those young people subject to Intensive Supervision and Surveillance, Eclipse are considering offering group interventions to general young people involved with the justice system. It is important to remember, however, that while research has found that young people themselves prefer peer group interventions<sup>139</sup>, the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction states that 'grouping together vulnerable young people with problem behaviour ... should be avoided'<sup>140</sup>. Not only

does this help to avoid norm narrowing and deviance modelling<sup>141</sup>, but in the particular case of Manchester, it can avoid exacerbating any pre-existing gang issues.

*'We have got to be careful with groups of young people, because you could have a young person at 12 and a young person at 18, and obviously [having] an 18-year-old with a 12-year-old might not be appropriate.'* (Eclipse 1)

*'You are creating quite a lot of risk, because there is a lot of, especially in North Manchester, gang-related stuff where one postcode will have an issue with another postcode, and the majority of the time it's because a person is selling drugs on the other persons postcode. ... So, if you have got a group of young boys sat in a group and someone says something about... You see what I mean? That could potentially be opening a can of worms that we don't want.'* (YJS 4)

*'[I: Are there any problems with groups?] Mixing gangs. You know, maybe sharing things in there that could be used against people. ... I think we have to be mindful.'* (Eclipse 1)

In addition to this, is the issue of what is actually delivered within group sessions. Research has found that interventions that address a range of risk behaviours connected to substance use, are more effective than those that focus solely on substance use<sup>142</sup>. There is also emerging evidence to suggest that interventions of this nature are more cost effective<sup>143</sup>. An evaluation of the RISKIT-CJS intervention - a multi-component intervention to reduce substance use and risk taking behaviour in young people involved in the youth justice system<sup>144</sup> - also found that young people particularly highlighted the preference for interventions that provided skills and strategies to manage risk<sup>145</sup>. Furthermore, Public Health England have highlighted the importance of developing young people's resilience, such as their life skills and their ability to make better choices and deal with difficulties<sup>146</sup>. It is crucial that Eclipse fully considers these points when designing and delivering, not only group sessions, but also longer-term one-to-one sessions.

It is also important to remember that group sessions - particularly with those more complex and vulnerable young people subject to Intensive Supervision and Surveillance - are not always the most appropriate way to identify or address the underlying reasons for a young person's substance use. As highlighted at the start of this chapter, the complex relationship between risk factors for offending, adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), and substance use was acknowledged by both the youth justice service staff and the Eclipse staff in this study.

*'I think group sessions are okay if you are doing a generic subject or delivering some general education, but if you are wanting to drill down and really get to the nitty gritty of it all, then you are not going to get that in a group setting.'* (YJS 4)

*'Groups are okay for basic education, but you aren't going to get any information out of young people in a group setting about their actual use.'* (YJS 1)

*'They [the young people on ISS] very rarely get the opportunity to have a one-to-one where they can, if they want to, let everything out. And in a safe environment rather than sitting in a group thinking, "Should I say something or not? Am I going to get the chance to say something after?" Yeah, it's very much, "We will do this group work with Eclipse and it's ticking the [substance use intervention] box", but it's not beneficial really. Not to the individuals who need it.'* (YJS 4)

The use of Eclipse-run group sessions with those young people subject to Intensive Supervision and Surveillance should also not be used as an 'easy' alternative for those youth justice case workers seeking to deliver the required programmed contact time to these young people.

*'The group sessions, that is an area the service needs to improve on. Because the more children who are accessing group sessions, means there is less work for the case managers, isn't there? ... If you refer onto that [substance use] programme, you're sorted for six-weeks.'* (YJS 7)

Before moving on to look at how to best engage young people into substance use services, it is worth briefly touching on the issue of follow-up interventions. Public Health England advocate the use of technology, such as social media, to follow-up young people<sup>147</sup>. As evidenced in the quotes from Eclipse staff below, the service does not appear to have a formal follow-up procedure in place to follow-up all those young people who have received some form of intervention. While it is clear that not all young people would require a follow-up, it might be worth considering the innovative use of technology to follow-up those more 'complex' or 'vulnerable' young people.

*'[I: Do you do follow-ups?] We used to, but now not as much. ... But you would let them know that they can call you.'* (Eclipse 5)

*'[I: Do you do any follow-up work?] We do have a re-uptake list. So if we close [the case of] someone with any kind of, say risk, ... we'll give them a call to check how things are. [I: But it's not something that's routine?] No, it's not with everyone.'* (Eclipse 3)

## Engagement

*'It's like nailing jelly to a wall isn't it? The whole process of getting a young person to engage [with Eclipse].'* (YJS 2)

As highlighted at the start of this chapter, research has consistently shown that, among some groups of young people, the use of cannabis has become normalised<sup>148</sup>. Indeed, a recent study of young people involved with the justice system found the daily use of cannabis to be

normalised<sup>149</sup>. In addition to this, the vast majority of young cannabis users in the justice system do not view their cannabis use as a problem, and for many, the use of cannabis is a central (positive) part of their identity. With this in mind, it is understandable why engaging young cannabis users involved in the justice system into specialist substance use treatment services like Eclypse is so problematic.

*'[I: What would you say is the main barrier to them engaging into substance use services?] I would say the number one reason is they [young people] don't actually want to reduce their use. They see it as positive and they are quite happy doing what they are doing.'* (YJS 8)

*'It's a waste of time and I don't see the point in it. They are telling me stuff, like how it [cannabis] effects my body and my mind and stuff like that, but I am not really bothered to be honest.'* (YP 1)

*'One of the main barriers is that a lot of young people don't want to give up and are not in a place where they want to start making changes [to their substance use].'* (YJS 5)

A further issue that exacerbates the difficulties in engaging young people into Eclypse is the fact that many of them have already previously encountered Eclypse in other settings (often school or college), and these experiences have put them off any future engagement with the service.

*'What you usually find is the majority of young people who have been misusing substances for a number of years will have [already] been directed to Eclypse, and when you say to them, "I think we need to make a referral to Eclypse", they go, "I have been there before. It doesn't work".'* (YJS 9)

*'The biggest barrier [to engagement] is they have actually worked with Eclypse before, ... are now they're like, "I have worked with Eclypse and it doesn't help, they don't know anything".'* (YJS 8)

*'I think Eclypse has got a bit of a negative reputation. A lot of young people say, "I've already done Eclypse at school. They're no good. I'm not working with Eclypse".'* (YJS 12)

As discussed earlier in the section on abstinence and harm reduction, many of the young people involved with the justice system are reluctant to engage with Eclypse because they think that Eclypse is solely an abstinence-focussed service. This misconception is particularly damaging to those young people who have had no previous contact with Eclypse, and as a result, no negative experiences of the service to deter them from engaging.

*'Some don't want to do it [work with Eclypse] because they think, "All they want me to do is stop".'* (YJS 9)

*'[I: Before you started working with Eclypse, what did you think it would be like?] I thought they would have [drug] tested me.'* (YP 2)

*'I find the young people are very resistant to meeting Eclypse. I don't know if it's due to the name, or they just think it's about stopping using cannabis and they don't want to stop.'* (YJS 5)

As already stated earlier in the chapter, it is clear that going forwards, work needs to be undertaken by both Eclypse and the youth justice service to tackle these misconceptions and raise awareness of what Eclypse, as a substance use treatment service, actually offers in terms of interventions. For a number of respondents in this study, the key issue is how Eclypse is initially 'sold' to young people.

*'We need to improve the way that we are selling it [Eclypse]. Is it about maybe having more information and leaflets there with them [the youth justice worker] on the first appointment? Is it about having whoever is from Eclypse there right away after their [first] appointment, to see them and say, "Hi, by the way I know that they spoke to you about Eclypse. This is my face, this is what I look like". That can be enough sometimes.'* (Eclypse 3)

*'Staff aren't pushing it [Eclypse], as in, "It's only voluntary, so you don't have to if you don't want to". All of that culture, the whole language thing, just everything needs to change.'* (YJS 12)

*'Is it [Eclypse] something that we need to make more attractive to young people? ... That's why we thought to try, for Eclypse staff to be there [based in the youth justice services offices] and maybe [then] we can promote the service [to young people] in a different manner [to how youth justice service staff do].'* (Eclypse 3)

As highlighted in the above quotes, one way to ensure that Eclypse is 'sold' to young people in the right way is to have an Eclypse worker physically based in the youth justice service offices. This is something that is currently ongoing within the Manchester youth justice service. Post-August 2018, the number of days an Eclypse worker is based in the youth justice service offices in Longsight and Cheetham Hill has increased, and may increase in the future. Not only will this help to make sure that Eclypse is 'sold' correctly to young people, but, as evidenced in the quotes below, it would also ensure that the Eclypse worker is available as and when a young person wants to see them; thereby increasing the potential for successful engagement. Indeed, the Drugs Prevention Advisory Service recommend that substance use workers should be attached to youth justice service teams<sup>150</sup>.

*'Sometimes a young person comes in and they might just be having an informal conversation with a case manager and ... disclose something that makes us concerned. ... So, if a young person is ready on that day and is willing to see somebody, you don't want to miss that for potentially another fortnight.'* (YJS 6)



*'Having a drug and alcohol practitioner ... based within Youth Offending Services, that to me makes sense. ... Because what you tend to find is young people are supposed to be at an appointment, and they wouldn't turn up for the appointment, but they might turn up a couple of hours later. If I was there, I would be able to catch them at that point. If I'm not there, that is a missed opportunity.'* (Eclipse 4)

*'What we see with our young people is that time is of the essence. They like to get things done all at once, so they will come in at eleven o'clock and see the YOT worker, they will see Eclipse at 12, and it's all done in one day. And they are happy with that because then they don't have to come back.'* (YJS 1)

*'If there was someone [an Eclipse worker] here more of the time it would definitely be helpful to give us a bit more scope to fit it in [a substance use intervention] around the appointments they [the young people] are already coming in for.'* (YJS 8)

In addition to being more available to young people, increasing the number of days that an Eclipse worker is based in the youth justice service offices will also help to better integrate Eclipse into the youth justice service, thereby improving inter-agency working relations.

*'[I: Do you think having the Eclipse worker based in the YOTs will help relationships?] Yeah, and I think then, that person stops being [seen just as] Eclipse, and they start being [seen by youth justice staff as] one of their peers and colleagues.'* (Eclipse 1)

*'I think they [Eclipse] should really have one worker based at the YOT full-time, ... [otherwise] they're not integrated into the Youth Justice Team like the other agencies who are based here permanently.'* (YJS 5)

Before moving on to look at how to best engage young people into substance use services, it is worthwhile to note that not all staff were so positive about integrating Eclipse more deeply into the youth justice service. As evidenced in the quotes below, there were concerns that young people might start to view Eclipse as part of the youth justice service, and by doing so, be less inclined to engage with the service and/or less inclined to disclose substance use. This is a problematic issue. As has already been highlighted in this chapter, the benefits of better integrating Eclipse into the youth justice service are clear. Nonetheless, how much Eclipse loses or keeps its identity as a separate substance use treatment service is an issue that needs careful consideration moving forwards.

*'I think they [young people] need to be aware that the two services are separate, ... for them to know that Eclipse is not part of the Youth Justice Service.'* (YJS 5)

*'I would prefer that [seeing a separate Eclipse worker] because I can't tell my YOT worker certain things. [I: Because...] Of the police and that.'* (YP 2)

*'They [young people] need to be aware ... that the two services are separate, because what happens is young people [will] put it on social media and it gets out that Eclipse is part of the youth justice service. Who in their right mind wants to nominate themselves to work with something to do with the courts, at that age, if they are smoking weed or whatever? If I was a young person, I would not disclose stuff to the Eclipse worker, because I would be sure it would get back to my [youth justice] case worker. So, yeah, they have got to be careful they don't lose that [separate identity].'* (Eclipse 5)

When it comes to the question of how to best engage young people in the justice system into substance use treatment services, it is crucial to ensure that interventions are designed to engage and retain young people<sup>151</sup>. As evidenced in the quotes below, it would appear that Eclipse are fully cognisant of the fact that interventions need to capture the attention of a young person if they want that young person to continue engaging with the service.

*'He [the Eclipse worker] quite often brought in art work for them to do. So, they would sit and do art work .... and then he would leap from the art work to discussions around substances.'* (YJS 5)

*'I ask them what they would like to talk about. So, things like lean or rap music and things like that, stuff that is all quite current and popular with them. [For example] Xanax is seen as a glamorous and fashionable thing because all the rappers are taking it. So, I think understanding a little bit about them, really, and getting to know them.'* (Eclipse 4)

*'You have got to make it exciting, and you have got to make it relatable to them [the young people]. ... I have got YouTube clips, I have got old pictures, I have got factual evidence on how it impacts the brain and things like that, I have got a lot of stuff, exciting stuff. ... Hopefully it's interesting [to them] and it'll get their attention.'* (Eclipse 5)

Notwithstanding this, it is essential that Eclipse deliver interventions that are pitched at the appropriate level for the young people involved in the justice system. As pointed out at the start of this chapter, many of the young people referred to Eclipse by the youth justice service have long substance use histories, as well as complex needs and vulnerabilities. Because of this, the kind of substance use interventions that might be appropriate with young people in a different setting (such as school or college), are unlikely to be of a suitable level for the youth justice cohort.

*'There has been times when they [Eclipse] have done group work with the ISS team and what staff have reported is that they don't feel it has always been pitched at the right level. So, they might be doing a session around alcohol and actually we have got kids in that session who are off dealing and involved in all sorts.'* (YJS 6)

*'I just think it [Eclipse] is a service that needs a bit of a redesign. ... I just think it's so out of date. ... Let's be realistic with these kids, let's not pussy foot around show a briefcase with lots of different substances. Let's show you, for example, a DVD about County Lines. ... This is actually what is going on. Bringing a little briefcase [a drugs box] along with lots of different substances, that's fine, but it's not tackling the problem that is going on in Manchester.'* (YJS 4)

Moving on, the fact that Eclipse will see young people in the wider community, not just the youth justice service offices or the Eclipse premises, is a major benefit when it comes to engaging young people into the service. Indeed, it is essential that substance use services like Eclipse are accessible to all young people, even those who do not feel able, for whatever reason, to come to official premises<sup>152</sup>.

*'If they [young people] prefer for us to see them somewhere outside of the Eclipse premises or the criminal justice premises, we are able to do that. We are able to see them in the community.'* (Eclipse 3)

*'I have come up against a lot of challenges regarding young people not attending, not wanting to come into certain areas [of the city]. ... If you are asking them to come to [the youth justice office in] Longsight or you are asking them to come to [the youth justice office in] Fulmead on their own accord, then, you know, it's difficult for them. So a lot of the time it's about having to go out. If you want to engage with them, you have got to make an effort.'* (Eclipse 4)

*'He [the Eclipse worker] was more persistent than other [substance use] workers that I'd seen over the years. [I: Persistent in terms of...] If they didn't come, [he'd] make an appointment to meet them, "There, I'll come and meet you after college, I'll come and meet you in the college canteen".'* (YJS 15)

When it comes to the question of whether or not to use social media to better engage with young people, Public Health England's substance misuse commissioning support pack 2018-19 advocates the use of technology such as social media to engage and maintain contact with young people<sup>153</sup>. While a number of respondents in this study agreed that the use of social media as a means of communicating and engaging with young people is something that should be pursued further, there was also the realisation that in the youth justice context in particular, this may not work as well as in other settings, such as health and social care.

*'I think, as a service, we [the youth justice service] are not up to speed with social media. Young people are communicating in different ways and I think services need to be ready and prepared to use the ways in which young people communicate ... to communicate with them and get them advice and get them information. I think we need to tighten up the way we do things and be smarter and more young-person focussed, because I think we will lose young people if we are not careful.'* (YJS 1)

*'You'd be surprised at how many young people [say they] don't have a mobile. [Well] most of them probably do, they just don't want to be contacted by us. We're a statutory service, we're seen as very much like the police or close to the police, so they don't want us sharing their contact details with police. So I think for us, that [using social media to engage with young people] would be quite difficult.'* (YJS 11)

## Staff training

Following on from the issue of how to best engage young people into substance use services, is the question of who actually delivers substance use interventions - in particular Tier 2 interventions - to young people involved in the justice system. Should it be the responsibility of the youth justice service, or the responsibility of an external substance use treatment service like Eclipse? Given the recent drive to increase referrals to Eclipse and subsequent engagement levels, this is particularly pressing question.

As highlighted earlier in the chapter, the quantitative analysis of the ChildView data revealed that, out of the 225 young people who had an Asset+ assessment undertaken between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018, around half (n=109) were assessed as 'currently using' substances at the time of their assessment. Going forwards, this means that potentially half of the youth justice caseload at any one time could be referred to Eclipse. Even if the vast majority of these young people required only a brief one-off intervention, this would still have huge resource implications for Eclipse. The most obvious solution to this potential problem would be to train youth justice service staff to deliver Tier 2 interventions to those young people with less complex substance use needs, thereby freeing up Eclipse staff to deliver Tier 3 and 4 interventions<sup>154</sup> to those more complex individuals. Indeed, this is the approach advocated by a number of the Eclipse respondents.

*'260 people is a lot of people for us [Eclipse] to have on a caseload. We would hope that we would be able to skill up [youth justice service] staff to have those very basic conversations about staying safe and no drug is a safe drug.'* (Eclipse 1)

*'It's about also skilling the [youth justice] staff, so if someone [a young person] just needs some brief advice or some brief information, then they can deliver that, and leave Eclipse to see the young people who actually need that specialist intervention from a specialist young person's misuse service.'* (Eclipse 2)

The idea of a young person's youth justice service worker (as opposed to an Eclipse worker) providing them with Tier 2 information and advice is supported by Public Health England. Their 2017 evidence review concluded that, for young people to achieve the best possible outcomes, they need time to build trust with

their worker and have one worker who supports them around a range of needs<sup>155</sup>. Similarly, their 2017 commissioning support pack notes that a positive and trusting relationship between a young person and their keyworker can contribute significantly to that young person's positive outcomes<sup>156</sup>.

*'It might be that the young person wants to address it [their substance use], but they might just not want to do it with a complete stranger [from Eclipse].'* (YJS 4)

Bearing in mind the multi-faceted role of contemporary youth justice workers, and the relationships that they build with the young people they supervise, it would make sense that the young person's youth justice worker delivers any Tier 2 substance use interventions. If this is the case, though, this raises the issue of youth justice staff being suitably trained to deliver such interventions. According to the prevention quality standards from the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, staff training needs should be assessed, and all staff responsible for delivering interventions should be trained to ensure that they are delivered to a high standard<sup>157</sup>. The need for substance use training was something that was repeatedly highlighted by the youth justice service respondents in this study.

*'Over the years they [Eclipse] have come in and done various briefings, ... but it's not refreshed all the time, so I have forgotten some of it. ... I would definitely like to have more training, especially with all the new drugs'* (YJS 8)

*'I don't think practitioners are equipped like we used to be in terms of our knowledge around drugs. Mine is very old school still. We've not had any refresher training for years. We're outdated.'* (YJS 11)

*'I am not an expert in this [substance use] and I sometimes feel the young people know more than I do about it, which is not ideal really.'* (YJS 8)

*'I would need a certain level of training, because I need to know what I am talking about. ... If you are giving a young person information you have got to be accurate in what you are telling them.'* (YJS 4)

*'Eclipse used to train us, but I haven't had any training for quite some time.'* (YJS 5)

All of the youth justice service respondents in this study were asked how they would like to receive any training in the future. Was their preference for face-to-face training, or training via, for example, email alerts and pdfs? As can be seen in the quotes below, the preference appeared to be for face-to-face training sessions that could be booked in advance. But, if any anything urgent emerged between these training sessions - such as the emergence of any new substances, or the news of young people having adverse reactions to substances - warning emails could be sent out.

Following the emergence of problematic 'Spice' use in the city<sup>158</sup>, a Professional Information Network (PIN) was established to provide practitioners and service providers with up-to-date information - via the Greater Manchester Local Drugs Information System (LDIS) - on new/emerging substances and/or adverse reactions to substances. It is clear that youth justice service staff would benefit from being part of the PIN.

*'One of the things that we are looking to put in place is pulling together a timetable of the [training] courses ... and people just book on them. ... To actually plan it out, a year's training programme.'* (Eclipse 2)

*'You still can't beat that face-to-face approach in my book [for training] and I would rather do that. I don't necessarily want to be inundated with loads of emails [with information], because I think we have enough to deal with.'* (YJS 9)

*'[I: How would you like to receive any training?] I think some level of face-to-face, even if it's just a briefing for a couple of hours, you know, half a day a year or something like that. But then in between it would be nice to get information sent through by email. You know, we are all on our emails every day, ... so any new drugs or new information that we need to be aware of or anything like that, it would be useful just to get that email through.'* (YJS 8)

In addition to Eclipse providing face-to-face training sessions for staff, a number youth justice service respondents noted how useful it would be to have a repository of resources that they could draw upon at any time to help facilitate any substance use interventions they were having to deliver themselves.

*'It would be useful if resources were collated somewhere on our system in a folder that we could go to. ... Like if there was a piece of generic work to do around cannabis and alcohol, that would be really useful.'* (YJS 8)

*'We used to get information, didn't we? You could just pick up, and you could run with it. We've got no resources at all anymore really. We've got nothing.'* (YJS 11)

## Information sharing

It is essential that, where you have multiple agencies working with a young person, information sharing protocols are put in place to facilitate multi-agency working<sup>159</sup>. Since August 2018, Eclipse workers have had access to the youth justice service ChildView system. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, this has made the referral process to Eclipse much more streamlined and straightforward for youth justice service staff. In addition, the fact that Eclipse staff now update ChildView themselves means that youth justice staff are quickly provided with an accurate picture of the work that a young person may, or may not, have undertaken while engaged with Eclipse.



*'With DNAs, we put it on ChildView. ... That means we have got communication backwards and forwards, and any risk can be picked up ... with regards to any DNAs.'* (Eclipse 1)

*'[I: And Eclipse staff now have access to ChildView?] Yes, I think that was a missing gap before. We didn't know what work had been done, to what extent, what the young person had taken on, so it was very difficult for us to assess and monitor risk levels, [and] whether there's any change in it at the end.'* (YJS 12)

*'He [the Eclipse worker] now can input himself the dynamics or whatever happened in that session. ... I wasn't there. It's best [that] the person who's running the session does it.'* (YJS 15)

*'Before, you were trying to chase down the Eclipse worker, you were trying to get an update on whether the session took place, and if it did, what happened.'* (YJS 4)

*'[Previously] if I had a young person that did a piece of work with Eclipse, I would have to be proactive in saying, "Can I have a summary about the work that you've completed with this young person and what the next steps are or what you think?" Other than that, I would have no idea about what had been done.'* (YJS 12)

Before moving on to look at service user involvement, it is also worth mentioning that giving Eclipse staff access to ChildView provides them with the ability to find out some more background information on the young person. Not only can this help to make a young person's behaviour more understandable to the Eclipse worker, but as highlighted in the second quote below, it can help reduce any risks that the Eclipse worker may face.

*'Access to ChildView ... is really helpful. ... If I look back at some of the things they [the young people] have done then I can understand it [their behaviour] and think, "Right, that makes sense that he has done that, and he behaves that way". So not necessarily talking to the young people about those incidents, but just having that knowledge is good.'* (Eclipse 4)

*'Obviously keeping yourself safe, because if I hadn't got that knowledge off ChildView that someone has stabbed someone and they carry offensive weapons, if I haven't got that information or someone hasn't passed it on to me, then that potentially puts me at risk.'* (Eclipse 4)

## Service user involvement

As noted in Chapter 2, in recent years, service user involvement has started to become a key principle in the delivery of, not only health and social care services<sup>160</sup>, but a whole range of public services<sup>161</sup>. In practice, service user involvement should involve those who use services being consulted, included and working together from the start to the end of any intervention that affects them<sup>162</sup>. While it has been acknowledged that the views of young people in the justice system need to be heard and given 'appropriate weight'<sup>163</sup>, in practice this has proved to be problematic for a range of reasons. As Public Health England noted in their 2015 service user

involvement guide, in the case of those young people involved in the justice system, there may be a lack of interest in becoming involved<sup>164</sup>. Added to this, when the youth justice service do get a group of people together to seek their views, as highlighted in the quotes below, they do not engage with the process.

*'Trying to get a focus group of young people together is next to impossible in our services because children don't come here out of choice.'* (YJS 7)

*'[I: Would you be willing to come in and give your time?] No, I wouldn't volunteer to do it.'* (YP 1)

*'We [do] try each month [to speak to young people], but the most we've ever had is three people at any one time, and then they don't really talk to each other.'* (YJS 7)

*'I think that part of the problem is getting them [young people] to form a [physical] group. Getting them to sit around and talk in a group is not what young people do.'* (YJS 1)

Yet it is precisely because of the fact that engagement is such a challenge for services like the youth justice service (that work with young people with invariably complex needs and vulnerabilities), that services need to ensure that they adapt their provision 'to facilitate engagement and promote continued contact'<sup>165</sup>. For example, research has found that those users who felt that they had been involved were 'more satisfied with their treatment, ... stayed in treatment for longer, and reported a range of positive subjective and objective drug and lifestyle outcomes'<sup>166</sup>. With this in mind, it is unsurprising that the Manchester youth justice service is currently pursuing ways to better involve the young people they work with.

*'That [service user involvement] is what we're pushing for, not just substance misuse, but throughout everything that we do. Trying to get the young person's voice in it all, just to make it more meaningful.'* (YJS 10)

*'I think that [service user involvement] really needs to be done. If there's a service for them [young people], their voice needs to be through it.'* (YJS 7)

The role that both current and ex-service users can play in the development of effective treatment services has been recognised by Public Health England<sup>167</sup>. In contrast to the youth justice service, Eclipse already has a range of service user groups in place, including a service user forum, service user ambassadors, and accredited peer mentors.

*'We have service user ambassadors. We have maybe fourteen young people that have engaged [with Eclipse] for maybe two years now. ... The ambassadors training is six to 12 structured group sessions, ... [and] then we link them [the ambassadors] with different events that we are delivering, for example any assemblies that we're going to do. ... We [also] have accredited peer mentor training.'* (Eclipse 3)

*'Eclipse have a service user forum made up of young people, and they meet up weekly at our offices in Thomas Street. It's a Wednesday evening, and that has been going for quite a while.'* (Eclipse 2)

One of the benefits of service user involvement is that it helps to ensure that services genuinely respond to the needs of users<sup>168</sup>, and by doing so, services then become more appealing to any new service users<sup>169</sup>. As described in the quotes below, both youth justice service staff and Eclipse staff appreciate the value of seeking out young people's opinions with a view to adapting and improving existing service provision.

*'It's definitely something we could do via our participation groups, you know, "What do you want? We can commission these things in".'* (YJS 6)

*'I'm finding that just having a session on, "If you had the power, what would you do?", is good because we come out with a load of things.'* (YJS 7)

*'That [service user involvement] would be a great idea within the YOT. ... I mean I have had young people say to me, "I don't want to come here and do the same things again", or, "I have done this kind of presentation before". And I will say to them, "What is it that you want to talk about or discuss, and we will talk about what you all want to talk about".'* (Eclipse 4)

While the youth justice service do currently ascertain the views of the young people they work with, it is important to remember that in contrast to the practices outlined in the quotes above, proper service user involvement goes beyond simply consulting young people in decision-making processes<sup>170</sup>. It is not simply a process of seeking the views and opinions of service users. Instead, as described in Chapter 2, it is about doing things 'with' young people, as opposed to doing things 'to' or 'for' them. In essence, it is 'strengths-based approach, which recognises that all ... young people ... have their own set of skills, knowledge and experiences which they can bring to the table'<sup>171</sup>. As part of the Knowledge Transfer Partnership between Manchester Metropolitan University and all the Greater Manchester youth justice services, a 'Participatory Youth Practice' model has been developed. The delivery of this model is still in its early stages, but when rolled out, it should provide a useful template for how youth justice services can effectively work 'with' young people.

*'We, as a service, have only just started [with service user involvement]. We trained up some staff with yourselves [Manchester Metropolitan University] to do the young person participation, ... but it's all very new, and we have got a long way to go.'* (YJS 7)

We must also bear in mind that, in a time of austerity, implementing proper service user involvement might be challenging. As Public Health England note in their service user involvement guide, 'limited resources,

especially in a time of austerity, can restrict providers' capacity to meet users' demands<sup>172</sup>. When combined with high caseloads of young people with increasingly complex needs and vulnerabilities<sup>173</sup>, it is easy to see why service user involvement may not be everyone's priority.

*'It [service user involvement] is good practice and it should be happening, but then we have got an issue with resources which are absolutely naff.'* (YJS 4)

*'I think in principle it [service user involvement] is a great idea, but I think in practice, the barriers that are there [with] so few staff with such high caseloads, I think people can't see the wood for the trees.'* (YJS 2)

## Chapter 5 - Recommendations

### Key recommendations

- **An Eclipse worker should be physically based in the youth justice service offices.**

This will help to ensure that Eclipse is 'sold' correctly to young people. It will also mean that the Eclipse worker is available as and when a young person wants to see them, thereby increasing the potential for successful engagement. In addition, it will help to better integrate Eclipse into the youth justice service, thus improving working relations between the two services. While the actual number of days a week that an Eclipse worker is based in the youth justice service offices is still to be decided, this study would suggest that the more days the better. Having said that, how much Eclipse loses/keeps its identity as a separate substance use treatment service is an issue that needs careful consideration moving forwards.

- **Eclipse workers need to continue to have access to the ChildView system.**

Access to the ChildView system is beneficial in a number of key ways. Firstly, enabling referrals to be made straight to Eclipse via ChildView means that the referral process is much more straightforward, with any unnecessary delays in making a referral avoided. Secondly, it enables the Eclipse worker to see the other information about a young person that is on the ChildView system, thereby giving the worker a better understanding of the young person's behaviour and needs. Thirdly, following any intervention, Eclipse staff are now able to update ChildView themselves, thus providing youth justice staff with a timely and accurate record of the work that has been undertaken with a young person.

- **Awareness of exactly what Eclipse offers (in terms of interventions) needs to be raised.**

It would appear that many of the young people involved with the justice system are labouring under the misconception that Eclipse is solely an abstinence-focussed service, and as a result, are reluctant to engage with the service. Going forwards, work needs to be undertaken (by both Eclipse and the youth justice service) to address this widely held misconception among young people, and raise awareness of what Eclipse actually offers in terms of interventions.

- **Eclipse need to train youth justice service staff to deliver Tier 2 interventions.**

If youth justice service staff are trained to deliver Tier 2 interventions to those young people with less complex substance use needs, it will mean that Eclipse staff are freed up to deliver Tier 3 interventions to those individuals with more complex needs. This will help to alleviate the resourcing pressures on Eclipse that will result from a significant increase in referrals from the youth justice service. When it comes to the delivery of training, the preference among youth justice service staff is for face-to-face training sessions that can be booked in advance. In addition to the training, a repository of resources that youth justice service staff can draw upon to help them deliver substance use interventions themselves should to be created by Eclipse.

- **Eclipse need to ensure that the interventions they deliver are pitched at the appropriate level.**

It is crucial that Eclipse deliver interventions that are pitched at the appropriate level for the young people involved in the justice system. Many of the young people referred to Eclipse by the youth justice service have long substance use histories, as well as complex needs and vulnerabilities. Because of this, the kind of substance use interventions that might be appropriate with young people in a different setting (such as school or college), are unlikely to be of a suitable level for the youth justice cohort.

- **Youth justice service staff need to sign-up to the Professional Information Network.**

To ensure that youth justice staff are kept up-to-date with regards to new/emerging substances and/or adverse reactions to substances, they should join the Professional Information Network (PIN) that disseminates information on behalf of the Greater Manchester Local Drugs Information System (LDIS).

## Supplementary recommendations

- **Engagement with Eclipse needs to be integrated into statutory supervision sessions.**

Changing the culture away from engagement with Eclipse being voluntary, towards engagement with Eclipse being integrated into a young person's statutory supervision sessions (for those young people whose offending behaviour is linked to their substance use) will increase engagement with the service. In addition, it will mean that engagement with Eclipse will now be enforceable.

- **Youth justice service staff need training on the treatment requirements that can be attached to Youth Rehabilitation Orders.**

If Manchester youth justice service do make the decision to start attaching treatment requirements to Youth Rehabilitation Orders (for those young people whose offending behaviour is linked to their substance use), then youth justice service staff will need training on exactly what these requirements entail, and how they can be best presented to the court in pre-sentence reports.

- **Harm reduction is a more realistic goal than abstinence with the youth justice cohort.**

While the emphasis at a policy level is often on primary prevention and abstinence, it is important to recognise that abstinence from substance use may not always be necessary to reduce the adverse health and social outcomes associated with substance use. Indeed, for young people who are already using substances regularly, harm reduction is likely to be more achievable than abstinence.

- **Interventions need to do more than simply provide substance use-related information.**

While young people do appear to value the provision of substance use-related information, research has shown that the provision of information alone is not effective per se in changing substance use behaviours and/or attitudes.

- **Engaging young people into multiple sessions should be a priority.**

Research has found that multiple sessions are more effective than one-off sessions in terms of addressing substance use in the longer-term. This highlights the importance of Eclipse ensuring that the sessions they deliver to young people with more

problematic substance use are geared towards retaining them for more than a single one-off session.

- **Interventions should address a range of risk behaviours, not just substance use.**

Research has found that interventions that address a range of risk behaviours connected to substance use, are more effective than those that focus solely on substance use. Indeed, it has been found that young people prefer interventions that provide skills and strategies to manage a range of risks. The importance of developing young people's resilience - such as their life skills and their ability to make better choices and deal with difficulties - has been highlighted as good practice. This underscores the importance of adopting a multi-agency approach when it comes to the development and delivery of substance use interventions.

- **One-to-one interventions should be prioritised over group interventions.**

While young people themselves appear to prefer peer group interventions, the grouping together of vulnerable young people with substance use issues should be avoided. This can help to reduce norm narrowing and deviance modelling, as well as the exacerbation of any pre-existing gang-related issues. In addition, group interventions are not the most appropriate method to identify or address individual group members' substance use issues and/or concerns. This is particularly the case with those more complex and vulnerable young people subject to Intensive Supervision and Surveillance. Indeed, Eclipse-run group sessions with those young people subject to Intensive Supervision and Surveillance should not take the place of one-to-one substance use interventions with this particular group of young people.

- **When it comes to the design and delivery of substance use interventions, the youth justice service needs to better involve the young people it works with.**

When it comes to proper service user involvement, the youth justice service needs to continue to pursue ways to better involve young people in the design and delivery of substance use interventions. Eclipse, for example, already has a range of service user groups in place, including a service user forum, service user ambassadors, and accredited peer mentors. While it is acknowledged that proper service user involvement with the youth justice cohort will not be straightforward, it is essential

that the youth justice service continue to strive to better involve the young people they work with. It is important to remember, however, that proper service user involvement goes beyond simply consulting young people in decision-making processes. Instead, it is a strengths-based approach that involves doing things 'with' young people, as opposed to doing things 'to' or 'for' them.

➤ **Eclipse need to regularly evaluate the service they offer to the youth justice cohort.**

It is important that Eclipse evaluate why young people involved with the justice system engage, or fail to engage, with the service, and respond to the findings of any evaluation by adapting their service accordingly. One way to achieve this is to build process and outcome evaluations into the design and delivery of any substance use intervention. While outcome evaluations focus on whether or not an intervention's aims and objectives have been achieved, process evaluations endeavour to understand how they were achieved, or in some cases, not achieved.



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<sup>164</sup> Public Health England (2015b) op. cit.

<sup>165</sup> Gilvarry, E. (1998) op. cit. (p.290).

<sup>166</sup> Fischer et al. (2007) op. cit. (p.4)

<sup>167</sup> Public Health England (2015b) op. cit.

<sup>168</sup> National Treatment Agency (2006) op. cit.

<sup>169</sup> Public Health England (2015b) op. cit.

<sup>170</sup> nef (2009) op. cit.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid. (p.2).

<sup>172</sup> Public Health England (2015b) op. cit. (p.6)

<sup>173</sup> Sutherland et al. (2017) op. cit.